

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. In a service-oriented architecture in which a client invokes a service from a service provider using a selected transport binding, a method of invoking said service comprising the steps of:

negotiating a service binding for a service invocation from said service provider in a negotiation process using a first transport binding; and

handling said service invocation using the service binding negotiated in said negotiation process.

2. The method of claim 1 in which said client is on a client side of a communication path, said steps being performed on said client side of said communication path.

3. The method of claim 1 in which said service provider is on a server side of a communication path, said steps being performed on said server side of said communication path.

4. The method of claim 1 in which said client is on a client side of a communication path and said service provider is on a server side of said communication path, said service binding being negotiated directly between said client side and said server side of said communication path.

5. The method of claim 1 in which said client is on a client side of a communication path and said service provider is on a server side of said communication path, said steps being performed on said client side and said server side of said communication path.

6. The method of claim 1 in which said service invocation passes through one or more intermediary nodes along a communication path between said client and said server as end nodes, said method steps being performed by one of said intermediary nodes with an adjacent node along said communication path between said client and said server.

7. The method of claim 1 in which said service invocation passes through one or more intermediary nodes along a communication path between said client and said server as end nodes, said method comprising the steps of:

having each pair of adjacent nodes along said communication path between said client and server negotiate a service binding for a portion of said service invocation passing between said nodes in a negotiation process between said nodes; and

having each pair of adjacent nodes handle the portion of said service invocation passing between said nodes using the service binding negotiated in said negotiation process between said nodes.

8. The method of claim 1 in said client is located on a client side of a communication path and said service is located on a server side of said communication path, said negotiating step comprising the step of:

determining whether said server side is capable of negotiating a service binding;

if said server side is determined to be capable of negotiating a service binding, negotiating a service binding with said server side; and

otherwise, selecting a service binding on the basis on information available on the client side of said communication path without negotiating with said server side.

9. The method of claim 8 in which said service binding is selected on the basis of diagnostic information available on the client side of said communication path.

10. In a service-oriented architecture in which a client invokes a service from a service provider using a selected transport binding, apparatus for invoking said service comprising:

means for negotiating a service binding for a service invocation from said service provider in a negotiation process using a first transport binding; and

means for handling said service invocation using the service binding negotiated in said negotiation process.

11. The apparatus of claim 10 in which said client is on a client side of a communication path, said negotiating means and said handling means being located on said client side of said communications path.

12. The apparatus of claim 10 in which said service provider is on a server side of a communication path, said negotiating means and said handling being located on said server side of said communication path.

13. The apparatus of claim 10 in which said client is on a client side of a communication path and said service provider is on a server side of said communication path, said service binding being negotiated directly between said client side and said server side of said communication path.

14. The apparatus of claim 10 in which in which said client is on a client side of a communication path and said service provider is on a server side of said communication path, said negotiating means and said handling being located on said client side and said server side of said communication path.

15. The apparatus of claim 10 in which said service invocation passes through one or more intermediary nodes along a communication path between said client and said server as end nodes, said negotiating means and said handling means being associated with one of said intermediary nodes along said communication path between said client and server.

16. The apparatus of claim 10 in which said service invocation passes through one or more intermediary nodes along a communication path between said client and said server as end nodes, said service invocation potentially using a different transport binding between each pair of adjacent nodes between said client and server, said apparatus comprising:

means at each pair of adjacent nodes along said communication path between said client and server for negotiating a service binding for a portion of said service invocation passing between said nodes in a negotiation process between said nodes; and

means at each pair of adjacent nodes for handling the portion of said service invocation passing between said nodes using the service binding negotiated in said negotiation process between said nodes.

17. The apparatus of claim 16 in which said service binding is selected on the basis of diagnostic information available on the client side of said communication path.

18. A program storage device readable by a machine, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by the machine to perform method steps for invoking a service in a service-oriented architecture in which a client invokes said service from a service provider using a selected transport binding, said method steps comprising:

negotiating a service binding for a service invocation from said service provider in a negotiation process using a first transport binding; and

handling said service invocation using the service binding negotiated in said negotiation process.

19. The program storage device of claim 18 in said client is located on a client side of a communication path and said service is located on a server side of said communication path, said negotiating step comprising the step of:

determining whether said server side is capable of negotiating a service binding;

if said server side is determined to be capable of negotiating a service binding, negotiating a service binding with said server side; and

otherwise, selecting a service binding on the basis on information available on the client side of said communication path without negotiating with said server side.

20. The program storage device of claim 19 in which said service binding is selected on the basis of diagnostic information available on the client side of said communication path.